



October 6, 2004

Reply to Attn of: Office of the General Counsel

TO: Distribution

FROM: Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Official

SUBJECT: Blanket Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA Employees at "Planet Earth: Our First Destination in the Exploration of the Solar System and Beyond," Buffet Reception at the National Air and Space Museum on October 14, 2004

On October 14, 2004, the Director of the National Air and Space Museum (NASM) and the NASA Administrator will host a buffet reception at the NASM in Washington, D.C. The evening's program is titled "Planet Earth: Our First Destination in the Exploration of the Solar System and Beyond." The keynote speaker will be Dr. Piers J. Sellers, astronaut. Other speakers will include the NASA Administrator, the NASM Director, a congressional representative, and the Director of Goddard Space Flight Center. I have determined it to be in the best interest of the Government for those NASA employees who are invited to this reception to attend in their official capacities and as representatives of NASA.

NASA, NASM, and the Goddard Contractors Association are sponsors of "Planet Earth: Our First Destination in the Exploration of the Solar System and Beyond." The Goddard Contractors Association is a business organization consisting of multiple contractors who conduct business with NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. Members of the Executive branch, members of Congress and their staff, representatives from private industry and contractors, as well as NASA employees from Headquarters and Goddard Space Flight Center will attend the event. Approximately 600 individuals have been invited to attend the buffet reception. The estimated cost of the buffet reception, which includes all food and beverages, is \$55 per person. As such, I find that this event meets the requirements of a "widely-attended gathering" as defined in 5 CFR § 2635.204(g). I therefore conclude that NASA's interest in its employees attending this event outweighs any concerns that the attendance may, or may appear, to improperly influence NASA employees in the performance of their official duties.

Accordingly, NASA invitees and their spouses or guests may attend the reception sponsored by NASM, NASA, and the Goddard Contractors Association on October 14, 2004.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Andrew Falcon". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "R" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R. Andrew Falcon